

# *The Queen's Report*

*Update from the*  
**Queen Anne's Revenge Shipwreck Project**  
Volume 4, Number 3  
Fall 2004

## **MICHAEL MANERCHIA**

A few months ago, the *QAR* Shipwreck Project received a call from Michael Manerchia who lives in Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania, a "three street wide town" on the southernmost point of the state. He said his wife, Pat, owns a plank house in sight of the Delaware River that has been in her family for 80 years and dates back to the early 1700's. It sits between two oil refineries, and its deed was originally part of a larger parcel of land from William Penn in 1683.



The evidence he was uncovering suggested that the house was once owned by a woman who was Blackbeard's mistress and that she may have regularly entertained and cooked for pirates. He had already uncovered a small cannon ball, assorted small artifacts, an 1812 Indian head penny (obviously left there by someone at least 100 years after Blackbeard), a hidden fireplace with ashes still in it, a beehive oven, and a room that might have been used as a counting room or a meeting place for pirate activity.

Blackbeard's presence in that area in the early 1700's can be documented. Our readers may recall that in our last newsletter we told the story of a poem 13 year-old Benjamin Franklin wrote about Blackbeard's death, and in 2003 we quoted the Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania who had issued a warrant against Edward Teach (Blackbeard) for being the worst of the pirates that plagued Pennsylvania waters.

Over the past three months Michael has periodically sent us pictures and reports about their excavation of the house. He works full time as a heavy equipment mechanic and operator, but, in his spare time, with advice from Dr. Heather Wholey, an archaeologist at West Chester State University, he is fast becoming an accomplished amateur archaeologist. Dr. Wholey taught Michael how to make a sifting screen, and he has cleaned, bagged, and numbered several artifacts. Another archaeologist told him he had never been on a dig with so much stuff in one place.

Their original idea, until they began discovering so many artifacts, was to remodel the house and live in it. Michael tells us that the borough would prefer that he and Pat tear it down in favor of more development in the area. Here, in his own words, is the last report he sent us. "Many experts have seen the house in the past two months. We have been told that this house is very rare. The PA Historic Museum people say it's the most significant house in the state of PA. Regretfully, the archaeologists have stopped me from any further digging until they can come up with a team to help us. We have formed a non-profit company, the Marcus Hook Plank Log Cabin Association. We now plan to restore the house and make it a museum. Oh, something you should like: we even have a picture of a ghost, and this is no joke."

The house's tie to Blackbeard may need to be verified, and, as for the ghost, we couldn't make it out from the picture Michael sent, but who are we to quarrel with a ghost?

Update from the

## *Queen Anne's Revenge* Shipwreck Project

Volume 6, Number 3

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Checking in with Blackbeard's Ghost up North

From time to time we have reported on the efforts of Michael Manerchia and his wife to renovate an old house of theirs near the Delaware River in Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania. The house dates back to the early 1700's and rumors are that it was once the home of a woman who was Blackbeard's mistress. The Manerchias had plans for remodeling until they found pieces of pottery and other items that suggested a better use for the house. The June

2006 issue of *That Old House* reported that the Manerchias have "donated the property to a nonprofit group set up to restore the house as a museum and field school for budding archaeologists". Michael, not a trained archaeologist, has, with professional advice, done most of the recovery and preservation of the artifacts he has found. We have two things in common with the Manerchia's: (1) we both applied to be named to the National Trust for Historic Preservation's "11 Most Endangered Historic Places" (neither of us received), and (2) they haven't found any evidence to support the Blackbeard mistress story yet, and we have not found any evidence behind the rumor that



Blackbeard had a hidden treasure stashed away somewhere on the outer banks of North Carolina. If we find anything to the contrary, we will be the first to let you know.